

Message Text

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TAGS: MPOL, PINT, FI, NO, UR
SUBJECT: FINNISH REACTION TO NORWEGIAN SPY DISCLOSURES

REF: OSLO 3484

1. SUMMARY: DISCUSSION SPARKED BY NY TID STORY (REFTEL)
ON NORWEGIAN SPYING ON USSR FROM FINLAND IN EARLY 50'S
HAS RECEIVED PROMINENT ATTENTION IN FINNISH MEDIA AND
PROMPTED A CONFIRMATION STATEMENT FROM CHIEF OF FINLAND'S
SECURITY POLICE (SUOPO). END SUMMARY.

2. INITIAL FACTUAL REPORTING OF NY TID ARTICLE BY FINNISH
PRESS JULY 21 WAS FOLLOWED BY STORY JULY 23 IN COMMUNIST
KANSAN UUTiset, WHICH FILLED OUT REPORT ON NORWEGIAN
TRAINING AND USE OF FINNISH SPIES WITH FILE MATERIAL ON
ALLEGED CIA ACTIVITIES IN FINLAND. COVERAGE BROADENED WHEN
FINNISH TV NEWS JULY 27 CARRIED LENGTHY EXCERPT OF MAJOR
BLINDHEIM'S NORWEGIAN TELEVISION INTERVIEW. THIS AND
SUBSEQUENT COMMENTS TO NORWEGIAN PRESS BY CHRISTIAN
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CHRISTENSEN AND COLONEL VILHELM EVANG WERE REPLAYED AS
FRONT PAGE STORIES IN SEVERAL FINNISH PAPERS.

3. ALTHOUGH MFA HAS NOT COMMENTED ON STORY SUOPO DIRECTOR
ARVO PENTTI ISSUED RARE PUBLIC STATEMENT JULY 29
CONFIRMING THAT SUOPO IN 1951 HAD DISCOVERED THAT
FINNISH MILITARY PERSONNEL HAD BEEN HIRED BY NORWAY

FOR RECONNAISSANCE IN USSR. ACCORDING TO PENTTI,
ONE FINN WAS CONVICTED OF ESPIONAGE FOR THIS ACTIVITY
IN 1952 AND TWO OTHERS IN 1970 AFTER RETURNING TO FINLAND
FROM LONG ABSENCES ABROAD. THESE CONVICTIONS HAD NOT
HITHERTO BEEN DISCLOSED AS IT IS FINNISH PRACTICE NOT
TO PUBLICIZE SPY TRIALS.

4. ONLY EDITORIAL COMMENT APPEARED AUGUST 1 IN LEADING
INDEPENDENT HELSINGIN SANOMAT, WHICH CRITICIZED GOF
POLICY OF SECRECY ON SPY MATTERS. NOTING THAT NORWEGIAN
STORY HAS AROUSED UNEXPECTED ATTENTION PARTICULARLY IN
NORWAY, PAPER SAID DISCLOSURES WERE HARDLY NEWS TO
AUTHORITIES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES AND WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN
SIGNIFICANT NEWS ITEMS IF SUOPO STATEMENT HAD BEEN
MADE EARLIER.

5. COMMENT: SUOPO PUBLIC CONFIRMATION OF NORWEGIAN
RECRUITMENT OF FINNS IS UNUSUAL TACTIC AND WAS APPARENTLY
DESIGNED BY GOF TO HEAD OFF FURTHER SPECULATION ON
STORY AND TO AVOID ANY SUGGESTION THAT FINLAND
HAD SANCTIONED ANY ACTIVITIES AGAINST USSR. IMPRESSION
GIVEN BY SUOPO'S FRANK ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND BY
PRESS TREATMENT IS THAT FINNS CONSIDER GOF ACTED
PROPERLY AT TIME IT BECAME AWARE OF INTELLIGENCE
ACTIVITIES, THAT MATTER HAS LONG SINCE BEEN CLOSED,
AND THAT GOF, AT LEAST FOR MOMENT, DOES NOT CONSIDER
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ISSUE WORTH FURTHER DISCUSSION.
RIDGWAY

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NNN

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